

Attachment 1

*New Westminster Climate Action Priorities to
Support the CleanBC Review*

Introduction

The City of New Westminster is committed to advancing bold, equitable climate action in response to the growing impacts of climate change on our community. Through strategies such as the Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action, the Community Energy and Emissions Plan 2050, eMobility Strategy and the operation of a municipal electric utility, New Westminster has positioned itself as a leader in climate action. However, to accelerate progress toward a low-carbon, resilient future, enhanced collaboration and alignment with the Province of British Columbia is essential.

This summary outlines key climate action priorities for the City that are most dependent on strong and sustained provincial leadership. These priorities span four critical sectors - transportation, buildings, energy, and financing and incentives, and reflect both the barriers local governments face and the opportunities available through strengthened provincial policy, legislation, and funding. These priorities not only highlight new or expanded opportunities, but also existing initiatives that the City values as strong baseline programs, which the City would encourage to be sustained.

The recommendations presented here are intended to inform the Province's ongoing CleanBC review and reinforce the role of local governments as essential partners in achieving provincial climate goals.

Transportation

Transportation contributes 42% of New Westminster's community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, primarily from fossil fuel use in personal vehicles. Beyond the climate change impacts, the movement of goods and people in fossil fuel powered vehicles contributes to traffic congestion and localized air quality issues such as smog.

The City is addressing these issues through its Master Transportation Plan, e-Mobility Strategy, and All Ages and Abilities Active Transportation Network Plan. These strategies aim to reduce GHG emissions, expand mobility options and improve safety.

The following have been identified as opportunities for Provincial support:

- **Secure long-term, stable funding for transit systems** (e.g. TransLink) to enable improvements in frequency and reliability, and expand service.
- **Develop supportive, non-competitive, funding models** to enable local governments to expand and maintain their own active transportation and transit infrastructure.
- **Maintain and strengthen the Zero-Emission Vehicle Act's (ZEVA)** to provide long-term certainty for electric vehicle (EV) markets, and include medium-duty vehicles.

- **Increase availability of affordable EVs** through strategic agreements and targeted incentives.
- **Establish a 2035 Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) target** and expand the program to allow building and transportation electrification projects to generate LCFS credits; and for utilities to reinvest credit revenues into public incentive programs, to further accelerate decarbonization.

Buildings

Buildings account for 54% of New Westminster's community GHG emissions, primarily from fossil fuel space and water heating.

The City has taken bold action by adopting the Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code early and accompanied by an aggressive implementation schedule to reach the highest levels of both codes by 2027. The City has committed to reducing emissions and improving energy efficiency in existing buildings through our Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action and Community Energy and Emissions Plan 2050, however local authority is limited within the existing building space.

The 2021 heat dome, highlighted the city's vulnerability to extreme heat events, with the highest per capita mortality rate among BC communities. The community is particularly vulnerable due to a high concentration of older multi-unit residential buildings that lack adequate cooling, both active and passive.

Through the City's concierge service for energy and emission retrofits, Energy Save New West has been supporting residents and businesses to plan upgrades, access incentives, navigate retrofit programs and plan retrofit projects.

The following have been identified as opportunities for Provincial support:

- **Maintain timelines and minimum performance requirements** of the Energy and Zero Carbon Step Codes, and address loopholes that allow fossil fuel systems in new homes;
- **Create opt-in performance requirements for existing buildings** (e.g. highest equipment efficiency standard) for alterations, equipment, and retrofits.
- **Ensure access to effective, energy efficient cooling**, particularly for vulnerable populations living in multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs), in coordination with updates to building codes, tenancy and strata legislation.
- **Implement building energy benchmarking and disclosure** through continued use and access to critical energy literacy tools like Energy Star Portfolio Manager, and integration of home energy labelling (i.e. energy use, carbon intensity and climate risks) into real estate transactions.

- **Support embodied carbon reductions in new construction** by enabling opt-in requirements for local governments.

Energy

The City of New Westminster operates its own municipal electric utility, uniquely positioning the City lead in advancing energy efficiency and electrification.

The City has been a leader in the energy transition through initiatives such as community-owned urban solar gardens, upgrading to advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), and Energy Save New West services and programs.

However to unlock the full potential of energy efficiency and decarbonization, the following have been identified as opportunities for Provincial support:

- **Regulate emissions from fossil fuel producers** by advancing the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Standard for Natural Gas Utilities (GHGRS) and expand the Low Carbon Fuel Standard to include natural gas.
- **Enhance Community Energy and Emissions Inventory (CEEI) data** by improving frequency, granularity, and establishing data sharing agreements with utilities and Crown corporations.
- **Modernize codes and standards** to enable wide-spread adoption of energy management technologies, both in existing buildings and new construction, to support affordability, energy efficiency, and decrease capacity requirements in new construction in support of electric utility distribution planning and load forecasting.

Financing & Incentives:

The Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) has been a critical enabler for the City's climate action initiatives, funding and staff capacity and market transformation. Additionally, CleanBC incentives for residents and businesses have played a crucial role in accelerating market transformation and supporting the adoption of low-carbon technologies.

The following have been identified as opportunities for Provincial support:

- **Maintain and expand coordination funding programs** (provincial, federal, utility) to maximize program accessibility and improve equity.
- **Enable financing tools** such as on-bill financing and property-assessed clean energy (PACE) programs.

- **Align incentives with low carbon resilient approaches** to ensure public funding delivers the highest affordability, health and economic strength outcomes.
- **Extend Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) funding through 2030** to provide certainty for local governments, and allow greater ability to deliver adaptation planning, data and reporting systems, and staff capacity.